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LETTER DATED 19 APRIL 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter, dated 18 April 1999, from Zivadin Jovanovic, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in reply to your letter of 13 April 1999 concerning the arrest of two Australian nationals in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Ambassador

99-11110 (E) 190499

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Annex

Letter dated 18 April 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to your letter of 13 April 1999, I would like to inform you that Australian nationals Stephen George Pratt and Peter Stewart Wallace were arrested at the border crossing of Batrovac on 31 March 1999 and are detained in the military-investigative prison. They are being investigated for the criminal act of espionage under article 128, paragraph 2, of the Penal Code of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the investigation conducted so far, the aforementioned persons have confessed that they have engaged in espionage for the benefit of the NATO aggressor and against the interests of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a victim of aggression, as well as that, in conducting the hostile activity, they recruited a number of other foreign and Yugoslav nationals. The accused are well and they are being treated correctly. The Embassy of Australia in Belgrade will be secured consular access.

Otherwise, I am very surprised that you should contact me in connection with the fate of the said Australian nationals who abused their humanitarian function to carry out dishonourable acts aimed at undermining the defence potentials of the country facing an unprovoked aggression of the Western military alliance because it refused to accept a foreign diktat in the solution of its internal questions. I would understand your "deep concern", as Secretary-General of the world Organization, the main goal of which is to safeguard international peace and security, work on a peaceful solution of disputes and promote equitable cooperation among sovereign Member States, if it related to the tragic fate of 11 million innocent citizens of Yugoslavia who have suffered the brutal aggression of NATO and the United States of America for 25 days on end. You know very well that the consequences of this aggression are enormous, that human casualties are many and that material destruction is exceptionally vast.

Notwithstanding the fact that the NATO aggression has seriously threatened the Charter of the United Nations and the very foundations of the Organization headed by you, we have not yet heard from you a word of condemnation of the aggression, let alone a request that it be stopped without delay. Therefore, the interest that you are showing at this juncture in the arrest of the two military spies, Australian nationals, and especially the threats to put conditions on extending humanitarian assistance to innocent victims of aggression we deem, to say the least, completely out of step with the situation and the function that you perform.

In that connection, I have to note with regret that, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, you have not shown a fraction of that concern for, nor have you condemned, the massacre of innocent civilians by NATO aerial bombardment at Pristina, Aleksinac (on 6 April), Cuprija, Belgrade, Kragujevac, Kursumlija (a refugee centre), Novi Sad and many other places.

It will remain on record that you failed to condemn the massacre of refugees in the convoy on 14 April 1999 on the Djakovica-Prizren road when, in four successive raids, NATO bombers massacred 75 children, women and the elderly, nor have you requested the Security Council to take action to condemn that genocidal crime and establish the responsibility of those who issued orders and those who carried them out.

(Signed) Zivadin JOVANOVIC